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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1108
INFO RUEHB/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 4197
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0344
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 4467
RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY 0310
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 9557
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 2455
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 3852
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 9562
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0173
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 0283
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0759
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1106
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1753
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

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DEPT FOR SCA/INS, PRM

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TAGS: PREF PTER NP

SUBJECT: MAOISTS BLOCK FOOD ACCESS TO BHUTANESE REFUGEE CAMPS

REF: KATHMANDU 944

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Maoist Roadblocks Prevent Food From Reaching Camps

11. (C) Maoist roadblocks on the highways in eastern Morang District, part of the Maoist "support of the seven-party alliance movement" (reftel), have prevented the World Food Program (WFP) from resupplying Bhutanese refugee camps with foodstuffs. Over 100,000 Bhutanese refugees in seven camps in Morang and Jhapa Districts depend on WFP for food. The April 13 Himalayan Times reported that Maoist disruption in transportation services has created a shortage of foodgrains in the camps, and quoted Kishor Rai, representative of the Bhutanese Human Rights Organization, as saying the WFP had not distributed any rice or vegetables to Beldangi and Sanischare camps for the past week. Rai explained that the WFP usually provided 400 grams of rice to each refugee daily, and noted that vegetables were also in short supply. "As transportation has ground to a halt, the supply of food grains has been affected. Stocks have run out," the WFP said in a press statement on April 12. The WFP in Kathmandu told Emboff that the last shipment of food from Biratnagar to the camps was on April 8 and confirmed the current food crisis.

World Food Program Appeals to Maoists

12. (C) A WFP representative told Emboff that trucks with food for the camps had been waiting in Biratnagar, Morang District since April 9, but due to Maoist roadblocks, the WFP could not reach the camps. She explained that the WFP had been in contact with local Maoists and had proposed running a convoy of trucks, led by UN vehicles, to transport the food to the camps. However, the Maoists noted that the roads were blocked by felled trees and large boulders, as well as

explosive devices, so the Maoists could not allow the WFP trucks through. When WFP stressed that the Maoist leadership had promised not to interfere with UN activities, the local Maoists told WFP they would have to "consult" with their senior leaders. In order to pressure the Maoists to act, the WFP decided to issue a press statement on April 12. The WFP also decided to take the supply trucks to the camps by going south from Biratnagar, into India, and back west into Nepal via Kakarbhitta, Jhapa District. WFP hoped to have the trucks depart Biratnagar on April 13, and reach six of the seven camps by April 15. However, the Maoists were blocking roads to one of the camps, and would need to allow WFP to pass in order for the food to reach the seventh camp.

Tibetan Reception Center Has Plenty of Supplies

13. (C) The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported no problems with food supplies at the Tibetan Reception Center in Kathmandu. The Center was currently housing 400 people who had fled Tibet and were waiting at the Center to transit to India. No one had been able to transit to India since the beginning of the general strike on April 6 as no public buses were running. However, many people were poised to take buses to India once commercial transportation resumed.

Comment

14. (C) The worsening security situation surrounding the Bhutanese refugee camps highlights the urgent need to address getting people out of the camps permanently.

MORIARTY